

Alternatives

Unique Non-Alcoholic Beverages

A Creative Collection of Recipes for



Seventh Edition

& Delicious High-Protein Appetizers

South Carolina

DAODAS

South Carolina Department of Alcohol
and Other Drug Abuse Services

101 Executive Center Drive
Suite 215
Columbia, SC 29210
telephone: (803) 896-5555
fax: (803) 896-5557
www.daodas.state.sc.us



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Help Your Guests Exercise Their Right Not to Drink

People increasingly are exercising their right not to drink. According to recent estimates, about half of all South Carolina adults currently abstain from drinking altogether. Another 40 percent are classified as “light” drinkers, consuming less than one drink a day.

These individuals are part of a downward trend of alcohol consumption, often dubbed the “sobering of America.” Because of the increased emphasis on health promotion and disease prevention, many people are making a conscious effort to limit their alcohol consumption.

Some people simply prefer other beverages. Others have physical conditions that prohibit their use of alcohol, such as pregnancy, diabetes, digestive disorders, cardiac or kidney problems, depression or alcoholism. Some individuals prefer to serve as the official non-drinking “designated driver.” Still others prefer to alternate their consumption of alcoholic beverages with non-alcoholic ones, especially when they’re thirsty. Finally, there are those who have reduced their alcohol consumption in accordance with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans (see Page 27) and consume no more than one or two drinks a day.

Despite their growing numbers, however, these non-drinkers and light drinkers frequently are overlooked at parties where the only truly appealing beverage choices continue to contain alcohol. Non-drinkers also want choices, but not necessarily the limited and unappealing selection typically served — soft drinks and mineral waters.

Think about the last time you planned a party. Did you go through your guest list to determine who preferred scotch, bourbon, gin, vodka or even something more exotic, like margaritas or daiquiris? Did you give any thought to the guests who might prefer something tasty yet non-alcoholic, or did you assume they'd settle for whatever mixers were available? Unfortunately, most party planners do exactly that. But that doesn't have to be the case. If you're planning a party, there are lots of festive and tasty non-alcoholic drinks that will show your guests that you've made a special effort to provide something that appeals to everyone, including the growing number of non-drinkers.

Following are several recipes for some delicious non-alcoholic drinks. Unfortunately, the drinks aren't necessarily "low-cal," particularly some of the frozen ones. But they're much less fattening than their alcoholic counterparts, not just because they lack the added calories of the alcohol, but also because evidence now suggests that alcohol suppresses the body's normal ability to burn fat.



Recipes for
Non-Alcoholic
Beverages

No-Tequila Margarita

1 (12-oz.) can thawed lemonade concentrate
1 (12-oz.) can thawed limeade concentrate
1 cup powdered sugar
4 egg whites
6 cups crushed ice
1 qt. club soda
Coarse salt (optional)

In 4-quart non-metal container, mix well the first 5 ingredients. Cover and freeze, stirring occasionally. Remove container from freezer 30 minutes before serving. Spoon 2 cups slush mixture into blender; add 1 cup club soda. Blend until frothy. To serve, rub rim of glass with lime slice and, if desired, dip rim in coarse salt. Fill glass. Garnish with lime slices. Makes 24 servings.

Piña Colada Perfecto

20 oz. unsweetened pineapple juice
7 1/2 oz. cream of coconut
1/2 large banana
Ice
Grenadine syrup (optional)
Pineapple chunks (optional)
Whole strawberries (optional)

Fill blender almost full with ice. Add pineapple juice, cream of coconut and banana. Cover and blend until thick and creamy. If desired, add a little grenadine to the mixture and blend again until it becomes pink in color. Garnish with fresh pineapple chunks and/or strawberries, if desired. Makes 10 (4-oz.) servings.

Virgin Mai-Tai

1/2 cup pineapple juice
1/4 cup orange juice
1/4 cup club soda
1 T. grenadine syrup
1 T. cream of coconut

Combine all ingredients in a shaker. Shake to blend. Pour into glass over crushed ice.

Brassy Blond

1 1/2 oz. grapefruit juice
1 tsp. strawberry syrup
3 oz. ginger ale

Pour all ingredients in glass over cubed ice and stir.

Dry Grape Vine

2 oz. grape juice
1 oz. lemon juice
1 dash grenadine syrup
Ice

Combine all ingredients in a shaker. Shake to blend and strain into a chilled martini glass. Garnish with a lemon twist.

Lime Rickey

1 oz. Rose's (sweetened) lime juice
Club soda
1 dash grenadine syrup

Fill glass with ice. Pour in lime juice. Fill glass with club soda and stir. Add grenadine and stir again. Garnish with a wedge of lime.

Passion Fruit Spritzer

4 oz. passion fruit juice
Club soda

Pour passion fruit juice over several ice cubes in a tall glass. Fill with club soda and garnish with a wedge of lime or fresh pineapple.

Orange Fizz

5 oz. orange juice
1 oz. sour mix
Club soda

Fill glass with ice. Add orange juice and sour mix. Top with club soda.

Romance on the Beach

1 oz. peach nectar
3 oz. pineapple juice (or grapefruit juice)
3 oz. orange juice

Pour peach nectar, pineapple juice (or grapefruit juice) and orange juice into a glass with several ice cubes and stir.

Arizona Sunrise

3 oz. orange juice
3 oz. ginger ale, chilled
1 tsp. grenadine syrup

Pour equal parts orange juice and ginger ale over ice in a tall glass. Slowly pour grenadine syrup into the middle of the drink. Serve without stirring. Tip: Gently pour the grenadine over the back of a spoon allowing it to float on top of the drink.

Bloody Good Mary

- 2 cups tomato juice
- 1 slice (1/2-inch thick) cucumber, unpeeled
- 1 strip (1/2-inch thick) green bell pepper
- 2 sprigs fresh parsley
- 1 stalk (8 inches long) celery, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 1 thin slice of lemon (with peel)
- 1/4 tsp. worcestershire sauce
- 1/2 tsp. salt (or less)
- 1 cup crushed ice

In electric blender, combine all ingredients except for ice. Blend on liquefy setting until smooth. Add ice. Again blend on liquefy setting until smooth. If desired, strain mixture to eliminate small bits of peel. Serve immediately or refrigerate, covered, until ready to serve. May serve straight or over cubed ice. Garnish with your choice of a celery stalk, a dill pickle, green olives or a slice of lemon. For a spicy variation, add a dash of hot sauce or a sprinkle of cajun seasoning. Makes about 4 (1-cup) servings.

Frozen Mango Daiquiri

- 1 ripe mango (about 12 oz.), peeled, pitted and coarsely chopped
- 1/4 cup unsweetened pineapple juice
- 2 T. fresh lime juice
- 2 T. superfine granulated sugar
- 3 ice cubes

In electric blender, combine all ingredients except for ice. Blend on high speed until smooth. Add ice cubes; blend until smooth and slushy. Rub rim of a stemmed glass with either a lime slice or a fresh pineapple slice and dip rim in superfine granulated sugar. Pour into glass; garnish with either a lime slice or a fresh pineapple slice and serve immediately. Makes 2 (1-cup) servings.

Salty Puppy

Coarse salt

Crushed ice

1 cup unsweetened grapefruit juice (freshly squeezed is best), chilled

Club soda, chilled

Fresh mint

Moisten the rims of two glasses with water and dip rims in salt. Fill glasses with crushed ice. Add 1/2 cup grapefruit juice to each glass. Fill glasses with club soda. Garnish with fresh mint. Makes 2 (1-cup) servings.

Lotus Blossom

1 ripe banana, peeled and cut into chunks

1 ripe peach, peeled, pitted and cut into chunks

1 ripe nectarine, peeled, pitted and cut into chunks

1 dash almond extract

24 oz. ginger ale, chilled

In electric blender, combine banana, peach, nectarine and almond extract. Blend until smooth. Divide fruit mixture equally among 5 tall glasses. Fill glasses with ginger ale. Stir gently. Serve immediately. Makes about 5 (1-cup) servings.

Mock Champagne

1 (32-oz.) bottle club soda, chilled

1 (32-oz.) bottle ginger ale, chilled

3 cups unsweetened white grape juice, chilled

In a large pitcher, combine club soda, ginger ale and grape juice. Mix gently. Pour into chilled champagne flutes and serve immediately. Makes about 11 (1-cup) servings.

Sangria Bueno

- 1 can (6-oz.) frozen orange juice concentrate, thawed, undiluted
- 1 can (6-oz.) frozen unsweetened apple cider concentrate, thawed, undiluted
- 2 liters club soda, chilled
- 12 to 16 ice cubes
- 1 orange, sliced
- 1/2 cup canned or frozen sweet cherries

In a large punch bowl or pitcher, combine orange juice concentrate and apple cider concentrate. Mix well. Stir in club soda. Add ice cubes. Float orange slices and cherries on top. Makes 9 (1-cup) servings.

Mint Julep Punch

- 3 bunches fresh mint
- Juice of 6 large lemons
- 1 1/2 cups granulated sugar
- 1 1/2 cups water
- 3 liters of ginger ale, chilled
- Ice ring with mint leaves and lemon slices frozen in it (optional)

In a large mixing bowl, crush mint leaves. Add lemon juice, sugar and water; mix well. Refrigerate overnight. Strain into a large punch bowl. Add ginger ale. Add ice ring, if desired. Makes about 16 (1-cup) servings.

Pineapple-Cranberry Punch

- 2 qts. unsweetened pineapple juice, chilled
- 2 qts. cranberry juice cocktail, chilled
- 16 oz. club soda, chilled
- 16 oz. ginger ale, chilled

Combine all ingredients in a punch bowl over a block of ice. Garnish with pineapple slices.

Perfect Party Punch

Ice ring:

2 oranges, unpeeled

2 lemons, unpeeled

Punch:

1 qt. apple juice

2 liters ginger ale

1 qt. fresh strawberries, rinsed and drained

For ice ring (which should be prepared several days ahead): Thinly slice oranges and lemons, then cut each slice in half. Arrange fruit slices in ring mold alternately and overlapping slightly. Add just enough water to cover slices. Freeze. Then fill mold with water and freeze.

For punch: Chill punch ingredients for 24 hours before serving. Remove ice ring from mold and put in punch bowl. Add apple juice, then ginger ale. Float strawberries on top. Makes about 25 (1/2-cup) servings.

Kiwi Kooler

3 kiwifruit

20 maraschino cherries

1 liter club soda, chilled

1 liter ginger ale, chilled

3 cups orange juice, chilled

1 pint vanilla ice cream

Peel and quarter 2 kiwifruit. Place kiwifruit and cherries in blender and blend on high speed until smooth. Pour into a punch bowl. Add club soda, ginger ale and orange juice. Mix well. Peel and slice remaining kiwifruit; garnish punch with kiwifruit slices. Spoon ice cream into punch. Serve immediately. Makes about 25 (1/2-cup) servings.

Yuletide Punch

- 1 (46-oz.) can apple juice
- 3 cups cranberry juice cocktail
- 1/4 cup honey
- Juice and peel of 1 lemon
- 1 tsp. whole allspice
- 1 stick cinnamon
- 1 star fruit (carambola), sliced 1/4-inch thick

In a large saucepan, combine apple juice, cranberry juice cocktail, honey, lemon juice, lemon peel, allspice and cinnamon stick. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat; simmer 10 minutes. Remove and discard lemon peel, allspice and cinnamon. Let cool slightly. Carefully pour into a heat-proof punch bowl or slow cooker. Garnish with slices of star fruit. Makes 18 (1/2-cup) servings. Note: This punch is just as good served cold. Simply cool completely and serve with an ice ring.

Mmmm Mocha

- 1/2 gallon chocolate ice cream, softened
- 8 cups coffee, chilled
- 1 pint half-and-half
- 1 tsp. almond extract
- 1/8 tsp. salt
- 1 square semi-sweet chocolate, grated
- 1/4 tsp. ground cinnamon

With mixer at low speed, beat ice cream and 3 cups of coffee until smooth. In a chilled 5- to 6-quart punch bowl, stir ice cream mixture, half-and-half, almond extract, salt and 5 cups of coffee until blended. Sprinkle top of punch with grated chocolate and cinnamon. Makes 16 (1-cup) servings

Hot Buttered Yum

1 pound butter, softened
1 (16-oz.) package light brown sugar
1 (16-oz.) package powdered sugar, sifted
2 tsp. ground cinnamon
2 tsp. ground nutmeg
1 quart vanilla ice cream, softened
4 quarts hot brewed coffee
Sweetened whipped cream
Garnishes: cinnamon stick, ground cinnamon

Beat first 5 ingredients in a large bowl at medium speed with an electric mixer until light and fluffy. Stir in ice cream; freeze in an airtight container until firm. Combine ice cream mixture and coffee in a large bowl, stirring well. Or for 1 serving, combine 3 T. ice cream mixture and 3/4 cup coffee in a large mug, stirring well. Serve with sweetened whipped cream; garnish if desired. Makes 20 servings. Note: Ice cream mixture may be frozen up to 1 month.

Strawberry Smoothie

1 (8-oz.) container vanilla yogurt
1 (10-oz.) package frozen strawberries
1 banana, sliced and frozen
1/4 cup orange juice
1 T. honey

Process all ingredients in a blender until smooth, stopping once to scrape down the sides. Serve immediately. Makes approximately 3 (1-cup) servings. Note: For a high-protein version, increase orange juice to 1/2 cup and add 6 T. of commercially prepared protein powder or 3 oz. of tofu.



Serve Alcohol with Caution and Food

Social gatherings are a way of life. We have them so we can enjoy being with family and friends. But we should never allow alcohol to become the most important reason for the party or its center of attention. If we depend on alcohol to make our parties a success, we're inviting an unwelcome guest — trouble.

When planning a party where alcohol will be served, it's always a good idea to mix a little caution with the alcohol. A good host should create a social atmosphere where all his guests feel welcome — those who drink alcohol and those who don't. By providing equally attractive arrays of both alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages, a host can support the decision of his non-drinking guests by offering them something more appealing than the typical choices of soft drinks and mineral waters.

In addition, a good host knows the benefit of serving food with alcohol — and not just salty chips and other knickknacks that do little more than stimulate thirst, but low-calorie, high-moisture-content foods (like raw vegetables) and high-protein foods (like meats, cheeses, eggs and seafood) that act as a buffer to the alcohol. These foods are vital accompaniments to alcohol because they remain in the stomach longer and thereby slow down the absorption rate of alcohol into the bloodstream.

High-protein party food suggestions include an assortment of fresh cheeses with crackers, cheese balls, cheese dips, cheese fondue and cheese pizza. Hard-boiled, pickled or deviled eggs are good also. Hors d'oeuvres with meat can include ham or sausage biscuits, Swedish meatballs, cold cuts, chicken strips, sliced beef or turkey, shrimp, lobster and crabmeat. A tray of crisp raw vegetables, including carrots, celery, cauliflower, radishes and squash, served with a protein-rich dip of cream cheese or sour cream, are also good suggestions.

good food,



good friends



*Recipes for
High-Protein
Appetizers*

Mexican Black Bean Salsa

2 cans black beans, rinsed and drained
1 (10-oz.) package frozen white shoepeg corn
1 red bell pepper, chopped
1 bunch spring onions or 1 small vidalia onion, chopped
1 large jar salsa
2 T. cumin
2 T. lemon juice
Salt and pepper to taste

Mix all ingredients and refrigerate. Serve with small round tortilla chips.

Vegetable Cheesecake

1 (5-oz.) package thin vegetable crackers
1/3 cup butter or margarine, melted
2 (8-oz.) packages cream cheese, softened
1/2 cup finely chopped broccoli flowerets
1/2 cup finely chopped red bell pepper
1/4 cup finely chopped green onions
1/3 cup grated parmesan cheese
2 tsp. ranch-style salad dressing mix
1/4 tsp. garlic powder
Dash of worcestershire sauce

Position knife blade in food processor bowl; add crackers. Process until crackers become fine crumbs (about 1 1/2 cups crumbs). Combine crumbs and butter; press mixture onto bottom of a 9-inch springform pan. Beat cream cheese at medium speed with an electric mixer until smooth; add broccoli and next 6 ingredients, mixing well. Spread mixture over crust. Cover and chill for 8 hours. Remove sides from pan, and place on a serving platter. Serve with cocktail bread slices or assorted toasts and crackers. Makes 12 appetizer servings.

Spinach Spread

- 1 (10-oz.) package frozen chopped spinach
- 1 package Knorr vegetable soup mix
- 1 (16-oz.) container sour cream
- 1 cup mayonnaise
- 1 (8-oz.) can water chestnuts, chopped
- 3 green onions, chopped

Thaw spinach and squeeze dry. Blend soup mix, sour cream and mayonnaise. Stir in spinach, water chestnuts and onions. Cover and chill for 2 hours. Stir well before serving. Serve with crackers. Makes about 4 cups.

Crabmeat Party Shells

- 8 oz. cream cheese
- 1 lb. crabmeat (white lump)
- 1/4 cup green onion, very finely chopped
- 2 dashes Tabasco (or favorite hot sauce)
- 1/2 cup heavy cream
- 2 dozen miniature pastry shells
- Paprika
- Finely chopped fresh parsley

Combine first 5 ingredients and cook on low heat for 20 minutes, stirring regularly. Fill pastry shells and bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes or until shells are golden brown. Top shells with a dash of paprika and a sprinkle of fresh parsley. Serve immediately. Makes 24 appetizers.

Appetizer Quesadillas

- 3 (6-inch) flour tortillas
- 1 cup shredded monterey jack cheese with jalapeño pepper
- 1 cup shredded cheddar cheese
- 1/2 cup finely chopped tomato
- Fresh cilantro, minced
- Corn or vegetable oil for frying

Fry tortillas one at a time in hot oil in skillet until crisp and golden, turning once. Drain on paper towels. Place on baking sheet. Sprinkle mixture of cheeses over tortillas; top with tomato. Bake at 350 degrees for 10 minutes or until cheese melts. Cut each tortilla into quarters; top with cilantro. Serve warm. Makes 12 quarters. Note: For variety, experiment with various toppings, such as grilled chicken, bacon crumbles, black beans, green onions, black olives or pepper slices.

Chile con Queso

- 1/2 tsp. margarine
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 1/2 tsp. minced garlic
- 1 dash worcestershire sauce
- 2 tomatoes, chopped
- 1 to 2 T. flour
- 10 oz. monterey jack cheese with jalapeño pepper, cubed
- 10 oz. sharp cheddar cheese, cubed

Melt margarine in skillet. Add onion and sauté until transparent. Add garlic, worcestershire sauce and tomatoes; mix well. Cook, covered, over low heat for 5 minutes or until tomatoes are tender. Stir in enough flour to absorb liquid. Add cheeses. Cook until melted, stirring occasionally. Serve with tortilla chips for dipping. Makes 6 servings.

Mustard Chicken Bites

1/4 cup prepared mustard
1/3 cup packed brown sugar
6 to 8 boneless, skinless chicken breasts, rinsed, drained and
cut into generous bite-size cubes
1/2 tsp. garlic salt
1/4 tsp. pepper
16 oz. applesauce

Blend mustard and brown sugar in bowl. Coat chicken with brown sugar mixture. Sprinkle with garlic salt and pepper. Arrange in single layer in greased baking dish. Spoon applesauce over top. Bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes. Place a serving pick in each bite and arrange on a platter. Serve warm. Makes approximately 35 to 45 bites.

Marinated Cheese

1/2 cup olive oil
1/2 cup white wine vinegar
3 T. chopped fresh parsley
3 T. minced green onions
1 tsp. sugar
3/4 tsp. dried basil
1/2 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. freshly ground pepper
3 cloves garlic, minced
1 (2-oz.) jar diced pimento, drained
1 (5 1/2x2x1-inch) block sharp cheddar cheese (8 oz.), chilled
1 (8-oz.) package cream cheese, chilled

Combine first 10 ingredients in a jar; cover tightly and shake vigorously. Set marinade mixture aside. Cut block of cheddar cheese in half lengthwise. Cut crosswise into 1/4-inch-thick slices; set aside. Repeat procedure with cream cheese. Arrange cheese slices alternately

in a shallow baking dish, standing slices on edges. Pour marinade over cheese slices. Cover and marinate in refrigerator at least 8 hours. Transfer cheese slices to a serving platter in the same alternating fashion, reserving marinade. Spoon marinade over cheese slices. Garnish with fresh parsley sprigs. Serve with assorted crackers. Makes 12 to 16 appetizer servings.

Fire-Roasted Tomato Chipotle Salsa

1/4 cup plus 1 T. virgin olive oil
1/2 onion, peeled and chopped
2 lbs. Roma tomatoes, blackened
4 tsp. roasted garlic, finely minced
1/2 cup fresh cilantro leaves, minced
4 chipotle chiles en adobo, chopped
1/4 cup red wine vinegar
1 T. salt
1 tsp. sugar

Heat 1 T. of olive oil in a sauté pan over medium heat until lightly smoking, add the onion and sauté until caramelized (about 10 minutes). Transfer the onion, half the blackened tomatoes and garlic to a food processor or blender, and pulse until finely chopped but not puréed. Add the cilantro and chipotle chiles, and pulse again to mix. Peel, seed and chop the remaining pound of tomatoes, and fold in together with the remaining 1/4 cup olive oil, vinegar, salt and sugar. Serve with tortilla chips. Makes about 4 cups.

Avocado-Serrano Salsa

- 2 large avocados (about 1 lb.), peeled, pitted and chopped
- 1/4 cup fresh lime juice
- 1 Roma tomato, diced
- 3 T. red onion, minced
- 4 tsp. serrano chile with seeds, minced
- 2 tsp. fresh cilantro, minced
- 1 1/2 tsp. salt

Carefully fold all ingredients together in a mixing bowl. Serve with tortilla chips. Makes about 2 cups.

Cocktail Quiches

- 1 cup (4-oz.) cheddar cheese, shredded
- 2 T. fresh chives, chopped
- 2 T. fresh tarragon, chopped, or 2 tsp. dried tarragon
- 3 dozen miniature pastry shells
- 3 large eggs, lightly beaten
- 3/4 cup half-and-half
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/4 tsp. pepper
- 1/8 tsp. ground nutmeg
- 1 dash hot sauce

Combine first 3 ingredients in a small bowl; spoon mixture evenly into pastry shells. Combine eggs and remaining 5 ingredients; stir well. Pour into pastry shells, filling three-fourths full. Bake quiches at 350 degrees for 30 to 35 minutes or until set. Makes 36 appetizers.

Swiss and Blue Cheese Crostini

- 1 French baguette
- 4 garlic cloves, pressed
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 12 marinated dried tomatoes, halved
- 4 oz. Swiss cheese, shredded
- 1 (4-oz.) package crumbled blue cheese
- 1/4 cup fresh parsley, chopped

Slice bread into 24 (1/4- to 1/2-inch) slices and place on an aluminum foil-lined baking sheet. Bake at 400 degrees for 5 minutes or until lightly browned. Combine garlic and oil; brush on bread slices. Top each slice with a tomato half; set aside. Combine cheeses and parsley; spoon on top of tomatoes. Bake at 400 degrees for 5 minutes or until cheese melts. Serve immediately. Makes 24 appetizers.

Blue Cheese Pecan Dip

- 1 (8-oz.) package cream cheese, softened
- 1 (16-oz.) jar of refrigerated blue cheese salad dressing
- 1 cup chopped pecans
- 1 (4-oz.) package crumbled blue cheese
- Pecan halves (optional)

Blend the first 2 ingredients with an electric mixer until smooth and creamy. Fold in the pecans and blue cheese. Cover and chill at least 3 hours. Garnish with halved pecans, if desired. Serve with assorted fresh vegetables.

Shrimp and Black Bean Caviar

1 can (16-oz.) black beans, drained and rinsed
1/4 cup yellow or green bell pepper, finely chopped
1/2 cup red onion, finely chopped
2 T. fresh cilantro, chopped
2/3 cup salsa
1/4 cup lime juice (unsweetened)
2 T. honey
2 T. vegetable oil
1 1/2 lbs. cooked shrimp, chopped
Salt to taste

Toss all ingredients. Cover and chill for 8 hours, stirring occasionally. Serve with tortilla chips or pita chips.

Artichoke Cups

24 small (about 3-inch square) wonton wrappers
2 jars (6 1/2-oz. each) marinated artichoke hearts, drained
1/2 cup mayonnaise
1/4 cup (1-oz.) shredded parmesan cheese
1 garlic clove, minced
1/3 cup diced pitted ripe olives
1/4 cup finely chopped red bell pepper

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Press wonton wrappers into lightly greased mini-muffin cups. Pat artichoke hearts dry; chop and place in medium bowl. Add mayonnaise, cheese and garlic; mix well. Stir in olives and bell pepper. Spoon into prepared muffin cups. Bake 12 to 14 minutes or until lightly browned. Remove from oven; cool in pan 2 minutes before carefully removing from pan. Serve warm. Makes 24 appetizers.

Ham and Cheese Puffs

- 2 1/2 oz. ham, finely chopped
- 1 small onion (about 1/4 cup), finely chopped
- 2 oz. Swiss cheese, shredded
- 1 egg, slightly beaten
- 1 1/2 tsp. Dijon mustard
- 1/8 tsp. ground black pepper
- 1 (8-oz.) package refrigerated crescent rolls

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Place ham, onion, egg, mustard and pepper in a bowl; mix well. Lightly spray mini-muffin pan with non-stick cooking spray. Unroll crescent rolls and press dough into one large rectangle. Cut rectangle into 24 pieces. Press dough pieces into muffin cups. Spoon filling into each muffin cup. Bake 13 to 15 minutes or until lightly browned. Serve immediately. Makes 24 appetizers.

Creamy Cheese Squares

- 1 box yellow cake mix
- 1 stick butter or margarine
- 3 eggs
- 1 cup chopped nuts
- 1 (1-lb.) box powdered sugar
- 1 (8-oz.) package cream cheese, softened

Melt butter and stir into cake mix. Add 1 egg and nuts. Mixture will be crumbly. Press into greased 13x9-inch cake pan. Beat softened cream cheese, powdered sugar and 2 eggs until creamy. Pour over layer in pan and bake at 350 degrees for 30 to 40 minutes. Cut into bars. Makes 24 squares.

Ginger Fruit Dip

- 1 (3-oz.) package cream cheese, softened
- 1 cup marshmallow cream
- 1/2 cup mayonnaise or salad dressing
- 1 tsp. ground ginger
- 1 tsp. grated orange rind

Beat cream cheese at medium speed with an electric mixer until smooth; add marshmallow cream and next 3 ingredients, stirring until smooth. Garnish with a fresh mint sprig and serve with fresh fruit. Makes 1 cup.

Melon Salsa

- 3/4 cup honeydew melon, diced
- 3/4 cup cantaloupe, diced
- 3/4 cup watermelon, diced
- 1 1/2 tsp. serrano chile with seeds, minced
- 1 1/2 tsp. fresh mint, minced
- 1 1/2 tsp. sugar
- 1 T. fresh lime juice

Thoroughly combine all the ingredients together in a mixing bowl. Serve with: water crackers; grilled shrimp or chicken; pita chips; or grilled flour tortilla quarters. Makes about 2 1/4 cups.



What Is “Moderation”?

Everywhere we turn, we hear messages designed to warn consumers about the potential negative effects of alcohol. Slogans like “drink responsibly,” “know when to say when” and “think when you drink” have become part of our daily existence. Yet, these messages are vague and ambiguous because they fail to provide useful information about safe levels of alcohol consumption.

For this reason, the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, developed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, have attempted to provide some specific recommendations regarding alcohol consumption. Although the guidelines do not recommend drinking, they do encourage adults who choose to drink alcohol to do so in “moderation.”

The guidelines define “moderation” as no more than one drink a day for a woman and no more than two drinks a day for a man. The recommended limits differ for men and women because of specific physiological differences between the two genders. For example, women typically become intoxicated after drinking smaller amounts of alcohol than it takes for men to reach the same level of intoxication. In addition, women are more susceptible than men to alcohol’s damaging effects to vital organs, such as the brain and liver.

The guidelines also define a “drink” as 12 ounces of regular beer, five ounces of wine or 1.5 ounces of 80-proof distilled spirits. These daily consumption limits apply regardless of how many drinks a person might consume on other days. Abstaining during the week does not justify “loading up” on the weekend without experiencing serious health and safety risks.

According to the guidelines, certain individuals should not drink at all – under any circumstances. These include:

- (1) individuals who are younger than the legal purchase age of 21;
- (2) individuals who are unable to limit their consumption to the daily amounts listed above, including recovering alcoholics, problem drinkers and people whose family members have alcohol problems;
- (3) women who are pregnant, trying to conceive or lactating;
- (4) individuals who are planning to drive an automobile, operate machinery or engage in other activities that require attention, skill or coordination;
- (5) individuals who are currently taking prescription or over-the-counter medications that can interact with alcohol; and
- (6) individuals with specific medical conditions.

The recommendation for abstinence among young people is one of the most crucial, not simply because underage drinking is against the law, but more importantly, because alcohol use is the number-one killer of young people today. These deaths are primarily the result of alcohol-related car crashes but also are caused by alcohol-related suicides, homicides, drownings, etc.

Only heart disease and cancer cause more deaths in this country than alcohol-related problems. Many Americans have modified their diets and their behaviors to prevent these dreaded diseases. So, too, can they prevent alcoholism and alcohol-related problems by adhering to the specific guidelines outlined above.



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